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ReasonableBeliefs



In Defence (& Criticism) of ISKCON

Criticism of other denominations

I see posts at least once a week either criticising ISKCON or it's translations. Some criticisms are valid but others tend to overemphasize ISKCON's flaws, make outright false accusations, misunderstand ISKCON, and ignore ISKCON's many many positives while also conveniently ignoring the much worse problems in other institutions (including in some Advaitin (non-dualist) mathas).

I used to respond individually to such posts but the sheer number of falsehoods made it very repetitive and tedious. So, upon the encouragement of [u/chakrax](#), i decided to write a single big post to do this once and for all.

I shall endeavour to make this of the highest quality possible within the 40,000 character limit, so that it can (i hope) be added to the FAQ or at least stickied for a while or both.

In this post i shall make a list of :

1. False Accusations and Rebuttals to them
2. Invalid Criticisms and Explanations of the misunderstanding
3. Valid Criticisms and Explanations of the problem
4. Overlooked Positives

Let us begin with the false accusations !

(1) FALSE ACCUSATIONS :

(1.1) FALSE ACCUSATION 1 :

ISKCON is "Abrahamic".

RESPONSE :

No ISKCON is not "Abrahamic". Yes, they worship Sri Sri Radha-Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and dont accept other Personalities of Godhead like Rama or Vishnu or Shiva or Durga as equal to Radha-Krishna. But this is not at all Abrahamic. This is perfectly normal Hindu practice.

Many Hindus are sadly spiritually uneducated and think that Advaita (Non-Dualism) is the only valid philosophy in Hinduism and that all Gods/Godesses MUST be considered by ALL Hindus to be exactly equal & the ultimately the same, otherwise the person is not Hindu or at least is very "un-Hindu".

This is simply false. But sadly this false view is encouraged by a few (but not all) Advaitins (non-dualists) who



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one form of Godhead is the Original Personality of Godhead from which all others emanate. This is not just true of Vaishnavism but also Shaivism and Shaktism. There are Shaivite and Shakta denominations that emphasize the Supremacy of Shiva and Lalita/Kali respectively.

Advaita, unlike what a few malicious Advaitins claim, is just one of many schools of thought in Hinduism. It is not, never has been, and never will be, the sole view of Hinduism.

(1.2) FALSE ACCUSATION 2 :

ISKCON is a cult.

RESPONSE :

No. There have literally been court cases over this and it has been conclusively established beyond any reasonable doubt that ISKCON is NOT a cult.

This false accusations of culthood were originally started by certain Christian groups to try and defame ISKCON since it was quite successful in Christian countries, and by some Christian parents who were angry that their children were leaving Christianity for Hinduism.

Here is an example from New York in 1977, showing how these false accusations got started and how the courts clearly acquitted ISKCON :

<https://www.nytimes.com/1977/03/18/archives/judge-rejects-charges-of-brainwashing-against-hare-krishna-aides.html>

ISKCON is NOT considered a cult by any **reputable** Psychiatric Organisation or by any **reputable** Government Anti-Radicalisation Organisation.

(1.3) FALSE ACCUSATION 3 :

ISKCON distorts translations of the Bhagavad Gita to present Bhakti-Yoga and Krishna's Personal Form as Supreme.

RESPONSE :

No. This is easily debunked.

1. There are a variety of valid Darshanas (viewpoints) that all accept the Bhagavad Gita as valid.
2. ***The very fact that different valid Darshanas exist that all rely on the same scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, proves that the Bhagavad Gita can be interpreted in different valid ways.***
3. ISKCON follows Achintya Bheda Abheda Vedanta, which is one such valid Darshana. Thus ISKCON's translations, in accordance with Achintya Bheda Abheda, are NOT distortions.



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This is completely in-line with what was said by both Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita itself and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (*the greatest promulgator of Achintya Bheda Abheda Vedanta, the philosophy which is followed by ISKCON*).

Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita 15.15

By all the Vedas, I am to be known

Objection : This says nothing about Bhakti !

We combine this with the final conclusion of the Bhagavad Gita that Krishna gives in 18.65 & 18.66 where it clearly talks of the Supremacy of Bhakti.

Being My devotee, offer your mind to Me. Offer articles to Me in worship. Offer respects to Me. I promise that you will come to Me alone without doubt, for you are most dear to Me. (18.65)

Giving up all dharmas, just surrender unto Me alone. I will deliver you from all negative reactions. Do not worry. (18.66)

Objection : Krishna is actually just one form of the formless and (allegedly) attributeless "Nirguna Brahman", that formless Nirguna Brahman is actually supreme !

Krishna very clearly says in Chapter 12 that those who worship the form are better established in Yoga than those who meditate on the formless

Arjuna asked : Which are considered to be more perfect, those who are always properly engaged in Your devotional service or those who worship the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested ? (12.1)

Krishna said: Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith are considered by Me to be most perfect. (12.2)

Krishna also says :

For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested & impersonal, advancement is difficult. To make progress in that way is challenging for those who are embodied. (12.5)

Objection : Worshipping Krishna's personal form might be easier, but the Impersonal Brahman is still superior. The Personal Form is only a stepping stone on the way to the Impersonal !

Krishna says in Chapter 14 that is the basis of the Impersonal Brahman

And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness. (14.27)



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sunlight is dependent on the Sun.

Furthermore Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (the greatest promulgator of Achintya Bheda Abheda) very clearly said that Bhakti is present in every single verse of the Bhagavad Gita. That a novice or a non-Bhakta might see Bhakti in only Chapters 6 to 12, but a true devotee will see Bhakti in every verse.

Then it becomes clear that the highest yoga is Bhakti-Yoga and Krishna's personal form is Supreme and it is through Bhakti-Yoga that all scripture (including the Vedas) should be interpreted. This is exactly what ISKCON does.

Now you may not agree with this interpretation, you may prefer an Advaitin interpretation (such as by Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharya) or a Shaivite interpretation (such as by Swami Abhinavagupta) or Shakta interpretation etc etc. That's fine, you can have your preferences. But you cannot deny that the Achintya Bheda Abheda interpretation (and thus ISKCON's interpretation) is also a valid view.

Now let us move onto some Invalid Criticisms brought about due to misunderstandings.

(2) INVALID CRITICISMS :

(2.1) INVALID CRITICISM 1 :

ISKCON mistranslates scriptures and calls Shiva and others as "Demigod"

RESPONSE :

This is a misunderstanding, people are incorrectly thinking that the word "Demigod" was chosen to insult Lord Shiva or insult people worship Lord Shiva.

ISKCON's founder Prabhupada translated Devatas as Demigod, yes. This is true.

But he did not actually mean that, he just wanted to find a word that westerners with 0 Hindu exposure would understand. And this can be easily proved.

Read the Bhagavad Gita translations of Bhanu Swami. He is a direct disciple of Prabhupada who on his Guru's orders has done many translations of Hindu scriptures, including of 2 Bhagavad Gita commentaries.

1. [Sarartha Varshini Tika](#)
2. [Gita Bhusana](#)

But since he is a native English speaker from Canada (of ethnic Japanese descent), he does not make the less than ideal word choices like "Demigod" that Prabhupada does.

How can one justify this change in word choice ? By pointing out desha-kalapatra, time-place-circumstances. We have to present the siddhanta (philosophy) dynamically according to time-place-circumstances. This desh-



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I completely recognize that Prabhupada has popularized and spread Hinduism far more than any other single Acharya in modern history. Thus, clearly at the time-place circumstances of Prabhupada (desha-kalapatra) the word Demigod might have been the right choice.

But however i also recognise that people today find it insulting (including myself), it is clearly NO LONGER a proper word choice (desha-kalapatra) and thus i never personally use it.

(2.2) INVALID CRITICISM 2 :

ISKCON insults those who worship the Devatas by saying that they are "not intelligent".

RESPONSE :

This is incorrect and it is due to 2 misunderstandings.

(2.2.1) **Firstly** in the Krishna-Bhakti tradition the word intelligent is not defined the way we do now (basically IQ or Smart), rather it is defined as the Spiritual Realization that Krishna is the Supreme Being. So **BY DEFINITION** anyone who did not realize Krishna as the Supreme Being is unintelligent. So it does not mean anything derogatory, its a matter of definition.

This is similar to how in the Jnana / Advaitin tradition the word knowledge is defined as knowing oneself to be identical to Brahman itself while thinking otherwise is considered ignorance. It is not derogatory, it is a matter of definition.

Objection : The modern definition is different ! Prabhupada was translating for a western audience like you said in (2.1). So why not use the modern definition !

This brings me to the second point.

(2.2.2) **Secondly** there are 4 things to keep in mind when reading Prabhupada regarding words like Demigod.

1. Prabhupada's 3rd or 4th language was English. He spoke Bengali and then Hindi and then English. And we can even say his Sanskrit was better than his English and so English was his 4th language. All of us can speak better English than Prabhupada.
2. Prabhupada grew up in the early 1900's which means even if his English was perfect, many meanings of many words would be different now. For example, the English word "gay" used to mean happy, now it refers to a homosexual man.
3. Prabhupada was writing for a western audience who had 0 knowledge about Hinduism and so was forced to try and translate Sanskrit untranslatable words.
4. Prabhupada was materially imperfect, like i will show in (2.4)

Thus it is not an insult, it is a matter of definition. And any incorrect use, based on today's definition, can simply be attributed to Prabhupada's less than great English.



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**RESPONSE :**

This is a misunderstanding also, people today fail to realise that the word "Mayavada" was a commonly used word for Advaita historically speaking and incorrectly think that ISKCON basically made it up just to insult Advaita (non-dualism).

This is false.

Mayavada is NOT a word that ISKCON, or ANY Gaudiya Vaishnavas, just made up. Other Vedantins, *AND EVEN ADVAITIN ACHARYAS THEMSELVES*, have used that word.

Bhaskara (9th Century CE), the propounder of bhedabheda-siddhanta, when writing about the Advaitins referred to them as Mayavadis

Expanding on the contradictory and baseless philosophy of maya propagated by the Mahayanika Buddhists, the Mayavadis have misled the whole world. (Bhaskara's Brahma-sutra-bhasya 1.4.25)

Even some Advaita Acharyas while commenting on a passage of Brahma Sutra Bhashya (2.1.28-29) mentioned Advaita as "Mayavada". For example : Sripada Vachaspati & Sripada Govindananda

Even Shaiva Acharyas have used the word Mayavada. Sri Umapati Shivacharya from the 13th century CE, who is even revered in every Tamil Shaiva temple, says in his Sankarpanirakaranam, 254th verse :

One who has sworn by mayavada will be punished even if there is one Deva left and all the rest are dead, and sent to Hell.

Thus it is very clear, that historically speaking this word "Mayavada" was common. It is NOT something that ISKCON has just made up.

However that being said :

I also completely recognize that since most people TODAY find it insulting, it is clearly NO LONGER a proper word choice (by desha-kalapatra as shown in (2.1)) and thus i will never use it. I will always just say Advaitins instead.

(2.4) INVALID CRITICISM 4 :

ISKCON are anti-science.

RESPONSE :

1. ISKCON is NOT anti-science.
2. ISKCON recognizes the existence of both Material Science and Spiritual Science. It recognizes that they both use the same principles (testability, verifiability, documentation & peer review etc), the only difference being that they deal with different subjects.



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4. ISKCON recognizes, and all material scientists agree, that what most present day material scientists have currently been able to replicate and verify could very easily change in the future.
5. ISKCON recognizes, and all material scientists agree, that the conclusions of material science are only true based on what we as Humans (on average) have the capacity to observe. But that beings (or even "enhanced" humans) with different observational abilities would disagree. For example, a colour blind species might reach different conclusions vs a species that can see colour.
6. ISKCON recognizes that great people past & present, such as the Vedic Rishis/Rishikas & some master yogis alive today, were & are able to use time tested repeatable and verifiable (scientific) means to alter their observational abilities to establish truths about both facets of the material universe & about spiritual matters beyond the material universe as well, but that many modern day scientists have not even bothered trying to replicate them. Even today those that are able, have seen & verified these truths for themselves. The verified scientific means by which to do this, such as the intense Tapasya & different Yogas, are still available for all to do to test & verify, but most people (including most scientists today) are unwilling to perform the experiments. Their unwillingness on this matter DOES NOT render those truths false.

Now, to be fair : Prabhupada did make statements against Evolution by Natural Selection and expressed skepticism on NASA's moon missions.

There are 2 ways to reconcile this -

(2.4.1) Srila Prabhupada by his own admission was materially imperfect, only spiritually perfect :

We have to recognize a couple of points:

1. The founder of ISKCON Srila Prabhupada did not have modern material scientific knowledge on some topics such as evolution or space travel. And due to this he has said some incorrect things regarding material science. *But this perfectly normal considering that Prabhupada was born in the 1800's, grew up in the early 1900's (a time when there was less consensus on evolution) in a colonized India where the colonial masters did not care to properly fund education. (Colonial British India's education budget was less than half the education budget of just the state of New York, the British did NOT care at all about Indian education).*
2. Srila Prabhupada NEVER ONCE said that he is materially perfect.

Hridayananda Goswami, one of the leading disciples of Prabhupada and the one who completed the translation & commentary of Canto 10/11/12 of the Srimad Bhagavatam after Prabhupada left his material body, very clearly has said on the record that Prabhupada told him and other disciples that in material matters he (Prabhupada) is flawed. That Prabhupada is ONLY spiritually infallible but materially very much fallible.

There are many examples of this i can give, but i will just give 1 obvious example for now :

Prabhupada has made some material predictions that did NOT come true in Prabhupada's own lifetime. Once Prabhupada predicted WW3 would happen and Russia would be destroyed by 1975. When this did not come true, Prabhupada himself essentially admitted that he had been wrong.

So it is clear that no one in ISKCON is OBLIGATED to take any of Prabhupada's material knowledge as Truth, and only his Spiritual knowledge is to be taken as perfect.



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As mentioned earlier,

The conclusions of material science are only true based on what we as Humans (on average) have the capacity to observe. But that beings (or even "enhanced" humans) with different observational abilities would disagree. For example, a colour blind species might reach different conclusions vs a species that can see colour.

ISKCON recognizes that great people past & present, such as the Vedic Rishis/Rishikas & some master yogis alive today, were & are able to use time tested repeatable and verifiable (scientific) means to alter their observational abilities to establish truths about both facets of the material universe & about spiritual matters beyond the material universe as well.

It's the reason why even in different Hindu documents we have different cosmologies. For example those of Surya Siddhanta and Aryabhatiya etc etc use the standard default sensory perceptions and are thus fairly close to modern scientific estimates. While those in the Bhagavatam and other scriptures use non-standard sensory perceptions arrived at by various Sadhanas.

The cosmology of the material universe given in the Bhagavatam and other scriptures is from the enhanced sensory perspective and not the mundane sense that most humans currently have access to. Prabhupada made his statements against evolution and NASA's moon mission based on the words of the Bhagavatam, which means he was describing Reality from the enhanced sensory perspective and not the mundane material senses.

Thus it is perfectly possible to both accept Prabhupada's statements (and thus the Bhagavatam) and still accept materially scientific conclusions like Evolution.

It's perfectly possible to accept the standard cosmology and other standard scientific facts as true based on the standard default human sensory perceptions, and also the cosmology of the Bhagavatam as true and other scientific facts of the scriptures as true based on altered sensory perceptions.

They are both true, merely from different sensory perspectives.

(2.5) INVALID CRITICISM 5 :

Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON, was sexist

RESPONSE :

A few people mistakenly claim that the founder of ISKCON was a sexist. But this is NOT a reasonable conclusion based on the totality of all that Prabhupada said and did.

It is important that first i re-iterate : *As shown in (2.4), we ONLY accept Prabhupada as a spiritual authority, NOT a material authority. So we are free to outright ignore any of his material statements if they cannot be justified, including his statements on women.*

Some of his material statements were just plain false. Prabhupada did make some outright incorrect statements on women. For example he once said :



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educationist. We don't find. They were all men.

If he said "majority were men" then it might be justifiable, but to say that "were ALL men"... this is just incorrect, and it is something that we could just reject by the reasoning shown in (2.4). But this is NOT an indication of sexism, it is merely a validation that on material matters Prabhupada had some incorrect notions (as shown in (2.4))

But the claims critics use to assert that Prabhupada was actually SEXIST, are just misunderstandings. For example :

1. They claim Prabhupada called women less intelligent
2. They claim Prabhupada said women sometimes enjoy rape

These can be rebutted.

(2.5.1) Prabhupada has made statements like this :

According to Chanakya Pandit, women are less intelligent and not trustworthy

But Prabhupada did not intend to mean that women are less intelligent in the modern sense of the word, this is a misunderstanding. This is rebutted using the same reasoning as present in (2.2) where he called people who worship Devatas as "less intelligent". Difference of definition, and a lack of modern English skills. In the Krishna Bhakti tradition intelligence is defined as being able to recognize oneself as a part and parcel of, and an eternal servant of, Krishna.

Furthermore Prabhupada never said that ALL women are less intelligent or that women SHOULD be less intelligent. It was not an indictment of women, rather a description of the state of affairs that historically has been prevalent.

This can be established by the fact that he has explicitly called women very highly intelligent as well on some occasions.

Krishna says in BG 10.34

Among women I am fame, fortune, fine speech, memory, **intelligence**, steadfastness and patience.

In its purport, Prabhupada says:

The seven opulences listed – fame, fortune, fine speech, memory, intelligence, steadfastness and patience – are considered feminine.

Prabhupada also says in Teachings of Queen Kunti, Chapter 3

she (Kunti) was the most intelligent, for she recognized Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Godhead.



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Prabhupada also openly declared that women can even be Gurus. This automatically debunks the ridiculous notion that he thought that women were actually less intelligent.

On June 18, 1976, Professor Joseph O'Connell of the University of Toronto asked Prabhupada,

"Is it possible, Swamiji, for a woman to be a guru in the line of disciplic succession?"

Prabhupada replied

"Yes. ...man or woman... Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā sei guru haya. The qualification of the guru is that he must be fully cognizant of the science of Kṛṣṇa. Then he or she can become a guru. Yeī kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei guru haya. In the material world, is there any prohibition that a woman cannot become a professor? If she is qualified, she can become a professor. What is the wrong there? She must be qualified. That is the position. **So similarly, if the woman understands Krishna consciousness perfectly, she can become a guru.**"

Thus clearly, Prabhupada did NOT actually think that women are less intelligent.

(2.5.2) This is an unfortunate misunderstanding due to his lacklustre English (as shown in (2.2.2)). He once did basically say that "women sometimes like rape".

But people conveniently ignore the many instances where Prabhupada has decried harassment and rape as bad (as common sense would tell us).

Here are just 2 examples :

Lecture on BG 1.36 – London, July 26, 1973:

Innocent women, they are very much harassed after the war by the victorious party. You know, the soldiers are given freedom to rape the women.

SB 3.14.40, Purport;

In a demoniac society, innocent animals are killed to satisfy the tongue, and women are tortured by unnecessary sexual indulgence.

Furthermore please note the exact wording Prabhupada used in the statement the critics use :

Rape means without consent, sex. Otherwise there is no rape. There was a rape case in Calcutta, and the lawyer was very intelligent. He some way or other made the woman admit, 'Yes, I felt happiness.' So he was released. 'Here is consent.' And that's a fact. Because after all, sex, rape or no rape, they will feel some pleasure. **So the lawyer by hook and crook** made the woman agree, 'Yes, I felt some pleasure.' 'Now, there is consent.' So he was released. After all, it is an itching sensation. So either by force or by willingly, if there is itching, everyone feels relieved itching it. That's a psychology. **It is not that the**



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consent. He even condemned the lawyer saying that he got his client off scot-free by "*hook and crook*". At the end he just made a statement that *sometimes* there is physiological pleasure even during a violent sex (which can in fact happen), but this does NOT constitute consent (still rape).

Based on all that Prabhupada has said and done, it is clear that he was NOT condoning rape, it's just that Prabhupada's english was not the best, as shown in (2.2).

I want to make it clear that rape is unjustifiable and rapists are the ones at fault, the victim is never to blame. And Prabhupada himself condemned harrassment and rape of women as demonic.

Thus based on the totality of all that Prabhupada said and did, it is clear that he was NOT a sexist.

(2.6) INVALID CRITICISM 6 :

Prabhupada, the founder of ISKCON, was racist

RESPONSE :

There are a couple of statements from Prabhupada that can be misinterpreted to be racist, but this is NOT a reasonable conclusion when you consider the totality of all that Prabhupada said and did.

I will rebut. But once again first i will re-iterate : *As shown in (2.4), we ONLY accept Prabhupada as a spiritual authority, NOT a material authority. So we are free to outright ignore any of his material statements if they cannot be justified, including his statements on different races.*

Prabhupada has repeatedly said many many times, that we are the imperishable Atman, and not the body-mind complex. That judging someone based on their external appearance is ignorant.

In a conversation with American Congressman Jackie Vaughn - Prabhupada said :

Krishna is black, and we worship Him. (laughter) You have seen our Deity? Yes. Kṛṣṇa is from your community (African Americans / Black community). (Prabhupada laughs) There is no question of black and white. Krishna consciousness is above the skin—the soul which is there. Either he's black or white or yellow, it doesn't matter. Dehino 'smin yathā dehe (Gita 2.13). This is the first education, that do not take the body, but the living force within the body. That is important; we have to understand that. We are talking from that platform."

Prabhupada initiated African American / Black disciples, even black Brahmacharis and Brahmanas.

Prabhupada personally arranged interracial, black-white, marriages, placed black disciples in high positions, and treated everyone equally.

Prabhupada preached in Kenya, a "black" country. Prabhupada said in a letter to Jayapataka from Nairobi, Kenya, in 1971 :



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Some Indians even were shocked at the sight of Black devotees of Prabhupada who travelled to India :

They said "How can these people become devotees?" Because Srila Prabhupada was also preaching to the Africans and the Afro-Americans, many black-skinned devotees also came to India. All of this was very surprising and not so easy to digest for many Indian people.

Thus it is clear that Prabhupada was NOT a racist.

We have to understand that Prabhupada's english language was sometimes not ideal, as shown in (2.2).

To quote Hridayananda Goswami :

Prabhupada lived most of his life in a world which regarded racism as being the moral equivalent of nationalism. Just as people feel they are morally justified in supporting and preferring their own families over other families, or their communities and countries over other communities and countries, or indeed just as there are groups that support women and criticize men, or vice versa, similarly before Hitler's atrocities, people all over the world supported and preferred their race over others. This was true not only in the West, but in Japan, India and so many other regions. After WWII and Hitler, and after the Civil Rights movement, racism became perhaps the single most sensitive moral issue in the West. **India is a different world, with a different history, and Indians of Prabhupada's generation never really learned post war Western sensitivities to race.**

(2.7) INVALID CRITICISM 7 :

ISKCON is homophobic

RESPONSE :

This is also another misunderstanding.

1. ISKCON does not prohibit anyone from joining based on sexual orientation.
2. ISKCON philosophy (Achintya Bheda Abheda) says that at the very end of the spiritual path, to attain realization of Godhead, all material attachments must be abandoned. This means ALL material attachments, including heterosexual sexual attachments, and not just homosexuality.
3. ISKCON acknowledges that progress is made step by step on the spiritual path. It does it in any way expect everyone to immediately become celibate. Vast majority of people in ISKCON (gay or straight) are NOT celibate, and that's ok.

Thus the core philosophy is NOT homophobic at all.

Now, to become initiated under a Guru in ISKCON one must meet a certain set of standards, one of which says "no illicit sex". The interpretation of this is where the differences emerge.



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but note that they, just like all of ISKCON, won't shun homosexuals from the temples or prevent them from being devotees, but rather just won't give them initiation unless they agree to lifelong celibacy.

But there are others who advocate for allowing gay marriage and sex within that gay marriage.

They make the following case :

1. They say that 99% of ISKCON heterosexuals treat "no illicit sex" as sex within marriage only, so why deny this to homosexuals ? That the Gurus of those heterosexuals either allow it, or at least look the other way, because the Gurus acknowledge that as the disciples spiritually advance they will slowly reduce and eventually abandon their heterosexual sexual attachments near the end of the spiritual journey anyway. So why deny this same route to homosexuals ?
2. Homosexual people are not excluded from the mercy of Radha-Krishna, and they should also be brought into the fold and not shunned away. If they also need to express their sexual desires (like 99% of ISKCON heterosexuals who are NOT celibate), they should be allowed this and not denied initiation just for this.
3. A committed monogamous relationship, homosexual or heterosexual, is spiritually far better than hedonistic promiscuity.

Some ISKCON swamis and bramacharis will even perform gay marriage ceremonies such as Rama Putra Dasa, Hridayananda Goswami, Chandramukha Swami etc etc : <https://akincana.net/2019/08/03/iskcon-performs-the-first-hare-krishna-gay-marriage-ceremony-in-brazil/>

Now lets consider some legitimate problems with ISKCON.

(3) VALID CRITICISMS :

(3.1) VALID CRITICISM 1 :

Some ISKCON devotees demean and insult Shiva or Durga or other Deities.

EXPLANATION :

This is absolutely true. I wish i could teach these less advanced devotees how to speak/behave properly. But sadly i don't have a magic wand to magically fix their bad behavior. I can simply hope that they advance enough in spirituality that the problem gets resolved.

(3.2) VALID CRITICISM 2 :

Some ISKCON devotees are anti-scientific.

EXPLANATION :

Yes this is absolutely true. As mentioned earlier, ISKCON itself is not anti-scientific, but while ISKCON does not



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(3.3) VALID CRITICISM 3 :

Some ISKCON devotees are sexist / homophobic etc etc.

EXPLANATION :

Yes but this is not a unique ISKCON problem. While ISKCON is not institutionally sexist or homophobic or racist etc etc as i have showed above, bigotry and discrimination will be present in some members of ANY group in the world.

Finally let's go over some things that ISKCON does that are amazing, that many other Hindu denominations completely FAIL at.

(4) SUCCESSES

(4.1) SUCCESS 1 :

No Caste Discrimination :

ISKCON firmly says that everyone is born as a Shudra

Skanda Purana 18.6.239.31

janmanā jāyate śūdraḥ

A Man is a sudra at his birth

And must earn the right to be a twice-born Dwija. Thus there is no caste based discrimination.

This is unlike many Casteist organisations (including many Advaitin Mathas)

(4.2) SUCCESS 2 :

No institutional sexism :

ISKCON gives the Sacred Thread through the Upanayana / Poonal ceremony to all qualified people, including women and not just to men.

They have started allowing women to be Initiating Gurus (Deeksha) Gurus, just as Prabhupada had wanted, despite resistance and setbacks due to the more regressive and less spiritually advanced groups within ISKCON.



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(4.3) SUCCESS 3 :

No racial discrimination :

All people of all races can be devotees, can be initiated, can be Brahmanas, Brahmacharis and even Swamis and Gurus.

(4.4) SUCCESS 4 :

Acceptance of other viewpoints :

ISKCON accepts other denominations as valid viewpoints. For example : ISKCON does NOT say that Advaita is false, simply that is an incomplete viewpoint, that they don't have the full picture. Unlike a few intolerant Advaitins (not all) who deny the viewpoint of ISKCON completely and claim Bhakti is useless sentimentalism. They accuse ISKCON of intolerance, but it is they who are truly intolerant.

(4.5) SUCCESS 5 :

Willingness to improve itself and adapt on the peripheral points with the times to spread love of Krishna (desha-kalapatra) :

There are groups within ISKCON that are advocating for and even perform and solemnize homosexual marriages, though admittedly they remain a minority at this stage.

(4.6) SUCCESS 6 :

Systematic teaching of philosophy :

By doing this they show the uneducated Hindu, and those less spiritually advanced Advaitins who look down on others, that Bhakti has a strong philosophical foundation and is not mere sentimentality.

They teach the common Prasthantrayi of Vedanta philosophy (Bhagavad Gita, Brahma Sutras, Upanishads) besides the unique scriptures of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

(4.7) SUCCESS 7 :

Incredible charity work :

There are tons of examples. here are iust a few :



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Bhaktivedanta Hospital : <https://www.bhaktivedantahospital.com/about-us/sri-chaitanya-seva-trust-cst>

Prison Service : <https://iskconnews.org/life-changing-service-shares-the-love-of-god-with-hundreds-of-inmates/>

COVID Relief : <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/15-crore-free-meals-provided-in-14-months-as-part-of-covid-relief-work-iskcon-official20210525233854/>

Akshaya Patra (by ISKCON Bangalore) : <https://www.akshayapatra.org/>

Thank you so much for reading this long post !

I hope i was able to help you come to a better, fuller and more complete understanding of ISKCON, and why it is better than some misinformed people think it is, and a LOT better than a few malicious people try to claim it to be.

Hare Krishna.

51



137



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harshv007 • 10mo ago • Edited 10mo ago •

Who gave the instrument to measure, whether they are equal or not?

Just going to summarise it here only.

If anyone wants to focus on krishna, do so. But one CANNOT say other forms are not equal to krishna, especially when krishna himself declares of his vibhutis in the Geeta.

0

Reply



ReasonableBeliefs OP • 10mo ago •

The determination of which Deity is the greatest is derived through a combination of Shastra + Sadhana.

And your below statement is false :

But one CANNOT say other forms are not equal to krishna,

This is false.



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and others are not.

Only the Advaitins disagree.

You may be an Advaitin, so that may be your interpretation. But you should know that the vast majority of Hindu Sampradayas & Darshanas disagree with you.

2

Reply

harshv007 • 10mo ago •

Well people can live in their ego, it doesnt make any difference to me. 🤔

Accomplishments are not an overnight task anyways

0

Reply



ReasonableBeliefs OP • 10mo ago •

You are free to live in your ego :)

The realisation that Advaita is not the only Darshana might take you some time to realise due to your ego, but I'm sure you'll get there one day !

Hare Krishna !

2

Reply

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Hinduism

Religion

Religion and Spirit



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My invocation to Sarasvati

940 upvotes · 8 comments



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ISKCON Kids from East Africa chanting Hare Krishna

753 upvotes · 81 comments



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The kind of India needs to go ahead with

704 upvotes · 18 comments



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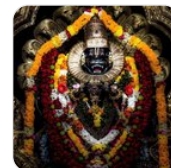


649 upvotes · 64 comments



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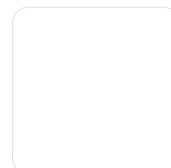
Ugra Narasimha



623 upvotes · 8 comments

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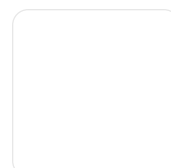
Bronze Statue of Krishna and Arjuna riding a Chariot, Kurukshetra, Haryana, India.



579 upvotes · 11 comments

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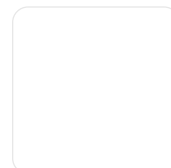
Krishna is the first stoic personality ever and Srimad Bhagvad Gita changed my whole life.



556 upvotes · 22 comments

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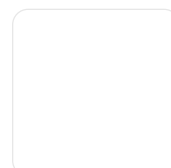
My little altar



490 upvotes · 29 comments

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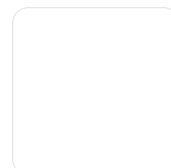
Performed Pitru Sukta Homa Today



483 upvotes · 8 comments

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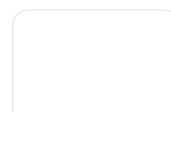
Made an illustration. Durga maa is coming



464 upvotes · 22 comments

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Help with Vishnu Sahasranama





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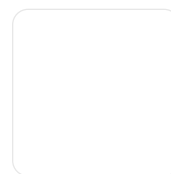
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Did you know that Lord Ganesh is also called "Ek Dant"

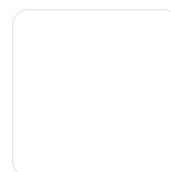
438 upvotes · 15 comments



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The only document (palm leaf drawing) which gives a full picture of how the complete Konark Sun Temple, Odisha looked before it's destruction.

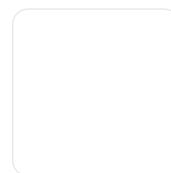
367 upvotes · 14 comments



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Vishnu wears Māyā (śakti) formed by various guṇas (Sattva, rajas, etc.) as the Vanamālā (garland of five special flowers). His yellow silken garment is made of the Vedas, and his...

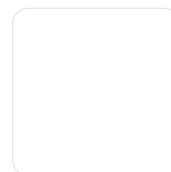
365 upvotes · 20 comments



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Help: Bhakti for multiple Devatas, who do I focus on??

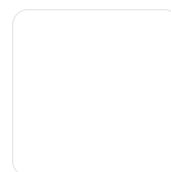
364 upvotes · 40 comments



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Which form of Ma Kali is this? Thinking of making it a Navratri photo frame!

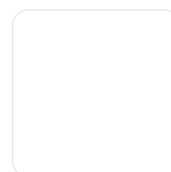
337 upvotes · 10 comments



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I might look weak but the hands our me are not.

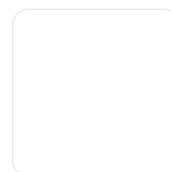
323 upvotes · 6 comments



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This great title of Bhagavān can be given only to Lord Vāsudeva, who is the directly the Supreme Brahman. For others, this word cannot be used. Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.5.76)

295 upvotes · 65 comments





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Do you think that foreigner Hindus are more rational than us?

283 upvotes · 69 comments

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Very pretty cover pictures in this issue of Kalyan

2

276 upvotes · 1 comment

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Can I keep pictures of Maa kali and Krishna in one sinhasana?(p.s. we are brahmins following vaishnava path)

275 upvotes · 57 comments

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Jai Sri Dwarkadhish Sri Krishna

260 upvotes · 3 comments

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Significance of Navratri

258 upvotes · 9 comments

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Feeling Very Grateful

0:56

247 upvotes · 6 comments

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What is Khatu Shyam Ji famous for?

208 upvotes · 11 comments



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